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LIVING IN TWO WORLDS:
ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMEN
AND EMOTION

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Communication

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Kimberly S. Gangwish

June 1996

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts, University
of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

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Date June 18, 1996

Asian-American women have faced certain difficulties in growing up due to the distinct differences in Asian and American cultures. The two cultures have philosophical differences as well as differences in acceptable manners of behaving and communicating. The expression of emotion is one of these areas. This research study looks at the differences in the two cultures concerning the expression of emotions and how this affects the women who are trying to live within both worlds. Ten first-generation Asian-American women were interviewed, using an oral history method, concerning three different situations. One situation involving just their parents, another involving their friends, and the final situation involving a situation where both parents and friends were present. The research showed that even though humans may feel emotions in the same way, the two cultures place different emphasis on the expression and the consequences of expressing emotions. The women were in varying stages of attempting to integrate the two cultures and their interviews show this process to be painful and confusing. But a dominant view from the women was that integration of the two cultures was the only way to achieve harmony within themselves.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

First-generation Asian-American women face a dilemma that has been portrayed from different viewpoints in modern fiction by Amy Tan in The Joy Luck Club and Maxine Hong Kingston in The Woman Warrior. The problem these women face stems from growing up in America with parents who grew up in Asia. The difference between the two cultures is significant enough to potentially cause problems for those Asian-American women who are trying to be accepted in both cultures. As Chen (1992) writes, "Standing astride two worlds, each with its beauty and pain, Asian-American daughters face both familial and societal difficulties in constructing a coherent sense of identity . . . from the parents' point of view, these daughters are never Chinese enough, and from the American perspective, it is difficult to relate to them simply as "American" women, born and reared in this society" (pp. 230-231).

The worlds in which these women live have each their own set of standards about what is considered acceptable behavior. Only through familiarity and understanding of the acceptable behavior of each culture will an Asian-American woman be able to function in an appropriate way in both cultures. This task is compounded when the expectations of the two cultures involved differ significantly from each other.

One way in which Asian and American cultures differ is in the communication of emotions. The way these two cultures differ in both their

beliefs about emotion and the display of emotions may cause problems for those individuals who must learn to function in both cultures. Studying the possible conflict faced by Asian-American women in this aspect of communication and how these women deal with it may offer further insight into the unique identity that first-generation Asian-American women are developing.

First-generation Asian-American women, for the purposes of this study, are women whose parents were born and raised in an Asian culture and relocated to America. These women may have been born in America and raised here, or may have been born in an Asian culture but were brought to the United States during their formative years. Thus, they are the first generation of their family to be raised in America.

As an Asian woman raised by a Caucasian family in America, I did not have to face the problems caused by the differing cultures. Growing up, I was faced with situations in which others thought that I had an Asian upbringing. These preconceived notions of what it means to be Asian and what it means to be American gave me a glimpse into what those who truly live in two different cultures must face as they deal with society.

I have known several first-generation Asian-American women and watching them try to cope with the expectations of the two cultures is what led to an interest in this subject. Listening to them talk about trying to please their parents, yet be accepted by their American peers, I realized how hard it was for these women to exist within both cultures at the same time. I believe it is a difficult process for these women to live within the two worlds that surround

them, and that is the reason I feel studies such as this one are necessary to better understand these women and the life they face each day.

The first section of this study will offer a review of literature on emotion and culture and the effect each has on the other. I will continue by looking at Asian and American cultures in particular. This review will lead to the development of two research questions. Following this will be a discussion of a research method that will enable me to gain further understanding and insight into the issue of first-generation Asian-American women and the expression of emotion.

Review of Literature

Theories of Emotion

The study of emotion has been a part of many different fields. Studies vary from those that deal with emotion in the animal kingdom to the psychological meanings of the various emotions humans express. The study of emotion and its relationship to communication has been fairly broad in scope, but a certain pattern of development can be determined in the various theories of emotion and emotional expression. For the purposes of this project, the varying theories of emotion have been grouped into four areas: physiological, psychophysiological, psychosocial, and cultural. Although theories do exist that cannot be placed into one of these categories, most theories concerning emotion can be found to contain aspects of at least one of these categories. The following literature review discusses each of these four areas of emotion.

Physiological Theories

The first theories of emotion focused on physiological changes. One factor these theories have in common was the idea that emotions were a result of physiological responses, which people could not control, to external stimuli. Theorists in this frame believed that the physiological arousal that occurred as the result of the external stimuli are both "the necessary and sufficient determinant of emotional experience" (Bowers, Metts, & Duncanson, 1985, p. 509).

Physiological theorists maintained that the neural reactions of a person to stimuli cause the individual's body to react in certain ways. Theorists such as Tomkins (1980), Tomkins and McCarter (1964), Izard (1977), and Ekman (1973) believed that these reactions occurred without conscious thought by the individual. Tomkins (1980) stated:

If internal or external sources of neural firing suddenly increase, a person will startle or become afraid, or become interested, depending on the suddenness of the increase in stimulation. If internal or external sources of neural firing reach and maintain a high, constant level of stimulation, which deviates in excess of an optimal level of neural firing, he will respond with anger or distress, depending on the level of stimulation. If internal or external sources of neural firing suddenly decrease, he will laugh or smile with enjoyment, depending on the suddenness of the decrease in stimulation (pp.143-144).

These neural responses would then cause the body to respond in certain ways,

such as flushing of the face and accelerated heart rate.

Theories in this frame were among the first theories of emotion developed and seemed to support the idea of universal emotions in that physiological arousal would be the same for all humans. It was believed that since, for the most part, the human brain was similar in all humans, reactions to external stimuli would be similar across continents.

Psychophysiological Theories

Theories of emotion continued to develop and change. Some theorists were not satisfied with the physiologists' claim that emotional responses did not involve conscious thought. These theorists developed a new arena of study concerning emotion that can be labeled psychophysiological theories. The name itself implies the main underlying belief of these theorists. Theorists such as Buck (1983, 1991), Collier (1985), and Murphy (1983) believed that emotions were a combination of uncontrollable physiological responses, the individual's cognition of the event, and the impact of that person's ability to control the outward signs of the emotional response. An example of this would be an increase in neural firing (a physiological step) that an individual may then be able to label a certain emotion (a cognitive step). Then the "cognitive and perceptual subsystems can interact with an emotion to regulate, sustain, and attenuate it" (Bowers et al., 1985, p. 511).

Even within the psychophysiological theoretical ground, differences exist. Two factions can be distinguished. The first group believes the physiological arousal comes first and then the individual determines from these

signs what emotion is being felt. For example, a person may notice an accelerated heart rate and flushing of the skin and determine that anger is being felt. The second group believes cognition has to occur first. In other words, these theorists believe emotions are the result of an individual's appraisal of the situation and this cognition then leads to the physiological responses (Bowers et al., 1985). For instance an individual would decide that he or she was angry and then this cognitive decision would lead to the heart rate accelerating, muscles tightening, etc.

Psychosocial Theories

Another realm of theory that differs from the purely physiological theories and takes into account human cognition is that of psychosocial theories. These theories acknowledge the role that cognition plays in emotion but also stress the importance of the interaction between self and the environment on the emotion. Researchers such as de Rivera (1977), Frijda and Mesquita (1994), Berscheid (1983), and Mehta and Clark (1994) support the notion that an emotion depends on how individuals perceive the environment and their relationship to the elements of that environment. An example is given by de Rivera (1977). If a person is driving a new car with a stick shift, he or she may feel ashamed when he or she grinds the car's gears. The level of shame will differ though depending on the environment. If one is alone, one may be somewhat embarrassed, but the level of shame is minimal. If others are present though, especially those who one knows, the shame is more acute.

Theories in this category have as a basis of thought the idea of social

roles. As Bowers et al. (1985) discuss, "Social roles are a complex matter.

First, they can be characterized as socially determined sets of responses, each set governed by certain rules and expectations . . . social roles are transitory in that appraisal is continual and when appraisals change so also do social roles" (pp. 507-508). These theories maintain that the situation in which the emotion occurs and the elements that are present affect what emotion is felt and to what degree it is displayed. Also inherent in these theories is the idea of socialization and the wish to fit into and be accepted by the person's social sphere. In other words, "When we are enacting a social role, we expect that we and others will feel and behave in particular ways and that deviations will be noticed" (Bowers et al., 1985, p. 507).

Cultural Theories

Theories of emotion continued to develop as more and more researchers began to accept the influence of social situations on emotion. Researchers then began to search beyond the immediate social sphere to the broader cultural sphere. What developed were theories that began to study the effect the broader culture had upon emotional development and expression. Theorists such as Levy (1984), Ellsworth (1994), Markus and Kitayama (1994a, 1994b), and Murphy (1983) are among those who have looked at the effect that culture has upon emotion. Kitayama and Markus (1994) sum up theories in this realm by stating, "Many of the emotions observed in everyday life seem to depend on the dominant cultural frame in which specific social situations are constructed and, therefore, cannot be separated from culture-specific patterns of thinking,

acting and interacting" (p. 6).

Research into the effect of culture on emotion can be viewed in two general ways. First is how culture shapes emotion, and second is how culture shapes emotional expression. In looking at how culture shapes emotion, it is believed that culture can affect almost every aspect of not only emotion but of the entire communication process. Culture "can penetrate deeply into virtually every component process of emotion, not only the cognitive or linguistic elements that are directly provided by the culturally shared pool of knowledge, but also physiological and neurochemical elements . . ." (Kitayama & Markus, 1994, pp. 7-8).

Culture also shapes emotion in that it determines which emotions are acceptable within the culture as well as within varying situations through how others in the culture react to various emotions (Buck, 1983, 1984). Culture educates the individual into what is acceptable and what is not in order to gain acceptance by peers within the culture (LaFrance & Mayo, 1978; Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1972; Bowers et al., 1985). Ellsworth (1994) continues this argument by addressing the issue of appraisal and culture. Cultures may appraise events in varying ways. This difference in appraisal will lead to individuals in different cultures experiencing different emotions from similar situations. Heelas (1986) sums up this issue in a study which found that cultures differ in how they view emotions--from what emotions mean, to the environment which generates emotions, to the power given to emotions, to the management of emotion. For example, a culture determines what "anger" is and

what type of situations should cause anger. Cultural influence then also determines in which situations the display of anger is acceptable and necessary.

The fact that culture can shape what emotions are experienced also ties into the idea that culture shapes emotional expression. Studies into the area of communicator style and emotions help support this concept. Communicator style, according to Jones, Brunner, and Remland (1986), "is a construct related to competence, (and) is based on the assumption that people develop a set of behaviors, (which) when used predominantly, may be viewed as an identifiable style of communicating" (p. 1224). This communicator style also affects others' perceptions of an individual. Cultures develop distinct communicator styles which are then considered to be the acceptable form of communicating within that culture. The communication of emotion is a part of a culture's communicator style in that cultures determine what is acceptable in both the communication of emotion and the reaction to emotion.

Much of the research in this area to date has focused on facial expression and verbal expression of emotion. LaFrance and Mayo (1978) find that at least "a few basic emotions are conveyed by the same facial expressions" (p. 175), but that "some cultures express more or less emotion than others" (p. 176). They also found that more control is placed over the negative emotions of anger, sadness, and fear than is placed over the positive emotion of joy.

Scherer, Matsumoto, Wallbott, and Kudoh (1988) found that some cultures are much more verbal in the expression of certain emotions than other cultures. Their study found that "anger and joy produce more verbalization, and

may thus represent somewhat more 'social' emotions as compared to sadness and fear" (p. 28). A study by Wallbott and Scherer (1988) found that "anger and joy are more 'active' in terms of nonverbal behavior than sadness and fear" (p. 44). In other words, the expression of anger and joy involves the use of more nonverbal behaviors than the other two.

A word of caution is necessary in viewing cultural differences in the expression and view of emotion. It is imperative that researchers keep in mind that individuals within cultures vary. It is necessary to remember that "different families in our culture, different subculture areas, and different ethnic communities have different emotional orientations, thresholds, and habits" (Murphy, 1983, p. 10). Within a culture there exist individual differences in appraisal of events. Researchers searching for cultural similarities must also keep in mind these individual differences.

Asian Culture versus American Culture

Assuming that culture does impact emotion, studying individuals who have more than one cultural background could expand communication theory. Past research has focused on the comparison of two cultures rather than the integration of cultures. By looking at the integration of cultures, new insights may be gained in the realm of culture and its effect on emotion. This section looks at how Asian cultures differ from mainstream American cultures and the possible impact that these differences may have on those individuals who must function in both cultures.

Philosophical Differences

Differences between Asian and American cultures derive from a difference in basic philosophy. The communication style in Western countries such as America derives from the Greek and Roman systems of thinking (Casmir, 1993), European humanism, and Levantine theocracy (Pearce & Cronen, 1980) which led to the value of logical thinking and expression of thought. The communication style of Eastern countries differs in that the main underlying philosophy in these cultures derives from the belief in Buddha and the sayings of Confucius which stress harmony (Pearce & Cronen, 1980; Park & Kim, 1992; Shenkar & Ronen, 1987).

The differences in these two cultures' philosophical heritage can be seen in the way in which each of them views communication and interaction with others. Ito (1992) cites Yoshikawa as stating that the contrast in Japanese and American styles are "attributed to differences in values, world views, beliefs, psychological tendencies and even to physiological differences" (p. 239). Wetzel (1988) and Ma (1992) discuss the indirect versus direct mode of communication. The Eastern cultures use an indirect mode of communication that stresses nonconfrontational and unemotional communication, while the Western cultures, especially America, stress direct communication which emphasizes confrontation and emotion.

Another philosophical difference between the two cultures can be seen in how each views language. Pearce and Cronen (1980) discuss the difference in how Eastern and Western cultures view communication. Eastern cultures

believe that language is deceptive because words represent generalized ideas and therefore fail to depict reality. This viewpoint differs from how Western cultures view and use language. According to Pearce and Cronen, Western cultures view communication as a means of discovering truth.

Collectivism and Interdependence versus Individualism and Independence

Eastern and Western cultures can be compared by two themes that the cultures are based on: (1) the tension between collectivism and individualism; and (2) the tension between interdependence and independence. The first is a broader way of viewing the cultures and the second is more focused on the view of the self. The ideas of collectivism and interdependence are typical of Asian cultures, whereas the concepts of individualism and independence are representative of the American culture.

Triandis (1994) and Matsumoto (1991) look at the collectivist concept. The collectivist cultures are ones in which the views, needs, and goals of the society or collective are given precedence over the individual's. These societies emphasize the social norms and expectations of behavior and the shared beliefs of the society. Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994a) look at the idea of the interdependent self. An interdependent view of self is based on the idea that the "self is not and cannot be separate from others and the surrounding social context" (Markus & Kitayama, 1994a, p. 97). In this view an individual tries to fit in with others, not stand apart from them.

According to Triandis (1994) and Matsumoto (1991) individualistic cultures, such as the United States and Great Britain, stress that the needs of

the self are more important than the needs of the collective. These cultures emphasize the importance of individualism and being a unique person. Along with this idea, is the idea of the independent view of self. "An explicit social goal from this perspective is to separate one's self from others and not to allow undue influence by others or connection to them" (Markus & Kitayama, 1994a, p. 96).

Triandis (1994) looks at the contrast between individualistic and collectivist cultures. Most individualistic cultures view the needs of the self as more important than the needs of the collective. Therefore, behavior is based on what is best for the individual and maintains the individual's unique identity. Collectivist cultures, on the other hand, view the needs of the collective as more important than the individual. Consequently, individuals in these cultures will view behavior as a function of norms that emphasize shared beliefs between the individual and the collective. Those individuals in an individualistic culture remain emotionally detached from the collective, whereas those individuals in a collectivist culture are very dependent on and involved with the culture.

These two varying views of self and society can also affect the expression of emotion. For those individuals with a collectivist view of culture and an interdependent view of self, the expression and experience of emotion will also be controlled by consideration of others in society. In order to function in a collectivist society, it is necessary to realize that how individuals react to a certain situation is based on how they believe it will affect other people. Simply, social needs take precedence over individual wants.

In societies that value the interdependent self, emphasis is placed on

"collective welfare and on showing a sympathetic concern for others" (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p. 228). In these societies, the other has much more importance than the self, and therefore an individual must always be aware of the emotional state of the other in order to maintain harmony. Only by emphasizing the needs of the other and maintaining social harmony will an interdependent individual develop a positive view of self. Shenkar and Ronen (1987) further this idea by stating, "to promote harmony, one must carefully curb one's emotions in public as a symbolic expression of selflessly enhancing the general welfare and avoiding the gratification of improper personal desires" (p. 267).

The way independent individuals view the expression of emotion contrasts with the way interdependent individuals view expression. In order to operate in an individualistic culture, a person must organize individual behavior in such a way that it is primarily focused on individual thoughts and feelings rather than on those of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This is not to say that individuals are not aware of and responsive to those around them, but demonstrates the fact that how an individual reacts is based on affirming the self. Because of this view, a person would not feel as much need to withhold the display of emotions as an individual from a collectivist culture because emotions are viewed as expressions of self and are therefore accepted by others in society.

Experience and Expression of Emotion

Differences in world view and communication of emotion in Asian and

American cultures are associated with differences in how emotions are expressed within the two cultures. A study by Scherer et al. (1988) compared people from Europe, Japan, and the United States in terms of how antecedents to emotional experience were viewed and the physiological and nonverbal reactions to emotions. They discovered that the three cultures differed in which antecedent events resulted in emotions such as joy, sadness, fear, and anger.

The results of this study are consistent with the idea that different cultures have different concepts of self and society. The finding that the Japanese experienced little "stranger fear" and low degrees of sadness at the loss of a friend illustrates the issues of interdependence and collectivism. These reactions could be due to the fact that no one is really a stranger in Japanese culture in that everyone is looking out for the welfare of the other. This could also account for the low degrees of sadness after a loss--since Japanese culture supports the notion of a very large family, the loss of one is compensated for by the remaining many.

The Americans, on the other hand, listed "stranger fear" as their number one fear, and the loss of a friend or close relative resulted in high degrees of sadness. These reactions can also be seen to tie into the independent and individualistic cultural view. Since this view lends itself to the idea that the individual is more important than the collective, it would make sense that individuals would fear strangers since it is understood that other people are only concerned with their own interests, not with those of others'. The high degree of sadness due to the loss of a friend or relative may be attributed to the feeling of

personal loss, a loss to the individual, which cannot be replaced by others within the society.

Studies have found differences between Asian and American cultures in the expression of emotion. Scherer et al. (1988) noted that in the verbal expression of emotion, anger and joy were communicated by all three groups, but the Japanese were much more verbal in their expression of joy. This may be due to the fact that the expression of negative emotions may cause negative feelings for those around an individual. In an interdependent society, it is important not to cause anxiety or negative emotions in others within an individual's sphere. Therefore an individual may not express negative emotions. However, positive emotions are ones to be shared with those around an individual. In independent cultures, negative emotions are seen as individual responses to events. Consequently, an individual in such a society would not feel the same constraints on the expression of negative emotions that individuals in an interdependent society might feel. As Scherer et al. (1988) observed, in Japan "negative emotions are much more culturally regulated than the positive emotions" (p. 26).

Klopf (1991) discusses another difference in the communication styles of these two cultures relevant to the communication of emotions. "The Japanese have traditionally placed a high value on silence, believing that a person of few words is thoughtful, trustworthy, and respectable" (p. 137). This ties into the findings of Scherer et al. (1988) who noted that the Japanese have fewer vocal reactions to emotions than Americans do.

Park and Kim's (1992) study viewed Koreans and the expression of emotion. The results of their study again reflected the underlying philosophical differences between Asian cultures and American culture. They found that Koreans are careful about showing proper respect for others, avoid being negative in communication, and smile to conceal anguish or enmity. These are generally unique features of an interdependent/collectivist view of the world.

Living in Two Worlds

Since Asian and American cultures have been shown to be different in how they view the self and society and how this view affects emotion, the question of how the combining of the two cultures affects an individual arises and inevitably causes a dilemma. First generation Asian-Americans must face this dilemma.

The issue of conflict faced by those who are raised within two cultures is not a new one. The number of those who must live with a hyphenated identity is becoming increasingly larger in American society. Asian-American women have been the subject of various studies. Chen (1992) cites Anthony Chan as arguing that Asian-Americans possess neither a genuine Asian perspective nor a wholly American one. Chen also cites Maxine Hong Kingston who saw herself "as embodying a synthesis of contradictions, not Chinese in some ways, American in others, but a whole person; a new kind of being who integrates diverse cultural experiences" (p. 231).

For these individuals who are raised by parents who grew up with and believe in traditional Asian ways, but are required to live in American society, it

is likely that mixed messages are being received as far as what conduct is appropriate. According to Chen (1992) "we see that bicultural identity is simultaneously expressed and constructed through this ambivalence and ambiguity that characterize the tension of living in the interface of two cultural worlds" (p. 232).

Asian and American cultures differ in how they view the interaction of self and society. Because of this, in order to be accepted within each society, Asian-Americans will need to learn the rules for both societies as well as acceptable behavior for different situations. Since the two cultures differ, it is possible that those individuals who must live within both worlds may experience a conflict in the expression of emotion in varying situations.

The study of emotion and culture has, for the most part, focused on the similarities and differences between distinct cultures. Little research has been done on the impact that merging cultures have upon individuals and their expression of emotion. Given the increasing number of individuals who have more than one primary culture, research into this area is critical. The conflict that could be caused by being part of two distinct cultures and having to merge with both is the focus of this study.

This study focuses on first-generation Asian-Americans. These individuals are in the unique situation of living within two worlds. Their home life with Asian parents represents traditional Asian societies yet they must live and function in mainstream American culture that represents a change from the home.

This study focuses on women only. The role of women in the two cultures is sufficiently different in present society to offer unique possibilities for study. In America, women are becoming a moving force in almost every area of life, whereas in Asia, women's roles are still secondary to those of men in many areas due to the more patriarchal nature of Asian cultures. This, coupled with the unique communicating styles of American and Asian cultures, may cause conflict for an individual who must cope with both worlds. This study should provide a better understanding of this potential conflict and its impact on the communication process.

Two research questions will be addressed: 1) How do Asian and American cultures influence first-generation Asian-American women's experiences of emotion? 2) How do Asian and American cultures influence first-generation Asian-American women's expression of emotions?

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

In this chapter I will identify the participants in the study, with a short description of each woman. Next a background and justification for the research procedure that is used is included. The procedure section also includes the outline for analysis of the information and a listing of questions to be used during the interviews.

Participants

The participants are ten first-generation Asian-American women college students. As discussed in the introduction, first-generation means the woman was raised in the United States by parents who were raised in an Asian country. These women were found through recommendations and the snowballing technique that, according to Babbie (1992), is accomplished when the researcher asks "one participant in the event under study to recommend others for interviewing, and each of the subsequently interviewed participants is asked for further recommendations" (p. 309).

The ten women all attend either the University of Nebraska at Omaha or the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Two of the women attended Johns Hopkins University for their undergraduate work. All of the women's parents are currently living in the United States. Nine of the women's parents are still married, only one of the ten has parents that are divorced. Four of the women are Vietnamese-American, one is Filipino-American, one is Filipino-Japanese-American, one is Laotian-American, one is Korean-American, one is Afghan-

American, and one is Pakistani-American. All of the women have lived outside of the parent's home for a period of time, but some have moved back in with their parents.

It is important to note the diversity of Asian cultures that are used in this study. It is imperative to realize that there is no one Asian culture, but many different sub-cultures that share belief and value systems. Although these cultures have differences, there is still a unique core belief system that underlies Asian cultures. Also the group of women who participated in this study is an educated group. Some of the women are currently working on their Bachelor's degrees, while others are now working toward graduate levels of education. Given the importance of education to Asian cultures, it is not unusual for these women to be educated. Education is the reason that many of their parents came to this country. The fact that all these women are pursuing higher education may reflect in the results of this study.

The ten women are described below and are identified by fictional initials in order to protect their privacy. T.T. is a 21-year-old Vietnamese-American who was born in Vietnam and began grade school there. She moved to the United States during her grade school years. At the time of the interview she lived with her parents. L.T. is a 20-year-old Vietnamese-American who is the youngest child in her family. Her parents speak little English and at the time of the interview she lived with them. F.K. is a 23-year-old Laotian-American with a sister and two brothers. When she was interviewed she was living with her parents. T.A. is a 20-year-old Vietnamese-American with one older sister. At

the time she was interviewed, she was not living with her parents. P.S. is a 22-year-old Korean-American with one younger sister. At the time of the interview she was not living at home. P.R. is a 21-year-old Vietnamese-American who came to America when she was three-months-old. She has an older brother and a younger brother and at the time of the interview was living with her parents. T.L. is a 32-year-old Filipino-Japanese-American. Her parents are divorced and her mother lives in Hawaii. When she was interviewed she was not living with either of her parents. C.S. is a 20-year-old Filipino-American who came to America with her mother as a young child. Her father joined them later. At the time of the interview she was living with her parents. A.F. is a 20-year-old Afghan-American whose parents speak little English. When she was interviewed she was living with her parents. L.K. is a 18-year-old Pakistani-American whose parents speak little English. At the time of the interview she was living with her parents.

Procedure

The study of emotion is problematic for many reasons because as Ekman et al. (1972) observe in the introductory chapter of their edited book, Emotion in the Human Face, "The lack of clarity about what to regard definitive of emotion presents problems not only for investigators . . . but also for the authors of this volume" (pp. 12-13). In relying on verbal reports of emotions, Gehm and Scherer (1988) state, "Emotions occur spontaneously and unpredictably in real life, and even if a researcher were present under such circumstances, the high degree of self-involvement and the speed with which the emotion process is

unfolding would make it rather difficult to get the subject to evaluate aloud" (p. 63).

Because of this, in many cases, it is necessary to study emotion through recall of situations. This in itself causes problems because it allows for post-situation interpretations, as well as the possibility that recall may not be correct. But Gehm and Scherer (1988) feel that, in spite of these drawbacks, "it is the only approach open to us in trying to obtain further information on the relationships between antecedent situation, evaluation, and consequent subjective feeling state" (p. 63). Matsumoto et al. (1988) also support this method for the study of emotions. They state, "There is no other way to assess subjective feeling states and evaluations of situations without asking subjects; this methodology is easily translatable to cross-cultural work; data can be used to examine cultural similarities and differences in the report of the emotional processes . . . " (p. 268). Epstein is cited by Bowers et al. (1985) as contending that "despite limitations, self-reports are comparable to and often preferable to other methods of emotion analysis" (p. 505).

Unstructured interviewing and specifically the use of oral histories are two recognized methods of research. The use of oral histories has become one of the most popular methods for feminist research (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Feminist researchers believe that oral histories offer women a chance to speak for themselves, offer an opportunity to find out the truth about feminine reality and allow women to discuss how they felt about events as well as the meaning and value of events (Anderson, Armitage, Jack & Wittner, 1990).

An oral history is "primary source material obtained by recording the spoken words--generally by means of planned, tape-recorded interviews--of persons deemed to harbor hitherto unavailable information worth preserving" (Starr, 1984, p. 4). Sitton, Mehaffy and Davis are cited by Perry (1989) as defining oral history as "the recollections and reminiscences of living people about their past " (p. 5).

Oral histories, as with any research method, have both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that they allow subjects to tell their stories in their own words leading, it is hoped, to the fact that the subjects' memories shape the categories of analysis. Oral histories offer a chance to gain insight into a subject's experience, to expand into areas that may not have been obvious at the start of the project, to "pry deeply into salient issues, and, in sum, to achieve thicker descriptions" (Perry, 1989, p. 4).

Disadvantages to the use of oral history stem from the requirements of reliability and validity. Perry (1989) responds that this disadvantage can be overcome by making an "earnest attempt to use replicable methods and then to challenge oneself constantly every step of the way. One must remain open to, even seek, the opposite of every finding" (p. 4). Other disadvantages to this method are that it is very time consuming and that the search for themes in analysis can be a difficult process.

Given the nature of this study and the focus on past experiences of women, I used oral histories as the method for this research project. The women were interviewed, one-on-one, in a setting that was familiar to the interviewee.

The settings included their homes, the University of Nebraska at Omaha library, the Goodrich building, and their former high schools. This, I hope, relieved some of the tension that may have come about as a result of being interviewed. The women were asked a series of questions involving incidents from three areas of life: 1) situations in which their parents were present, 2) situations in which their parents were absent, and 3) situations in which both parents and non-Asian-Americans were present. This study focused on those three areas with the belief that the women experienced potential conflict in the expression of emotions caused by parental influence. The parents are representative of traditional Asian cultures and their expectations of the daughter may impact the experiences retold in the interview. A comparison of these three areas allowed me to explore conflicts experienced in the experience and expression of emotion in the different situations.

The interviews were tape recorded and I made transcripts of the tapes. In addition to this, I wrote notes after the interview regarding any observations made during the interview. I did not write notes during the interview in order not to distract the participants.

For analysis, I looked for information about how Asian and American cultures influenced the experience and expression of emotion. The transcripts were examined to determine themes in order to gain more insight into how first-generation Asian-American women deal with emotional expression given the differences in cultural expectations. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), analysis is achieved by first conceptualizing the data by asking questions about

ideas such as "What does this mean?" From these conceptualizations, categories of ideas are developed and named. This process of open coding then leads to the process of axial coding in which data is put "back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories" (p. 97). Through this process, patterns or themes are discovered.

I asked the following questions:

1. Would you tell me about a situation involving your parents in which you experienced a strong emotion?
2. Would you tell me about a situation that occurred in a social setting with your parents absent in which you experienced a strong emotion?
3. Would you tell me about a situation with both your parents and non-Asian-American individuals present in which you experienced a strong emotion?

I also asked spontaneous probing questions to reach more understanding as to the issue of the influence of the cultures on the experience and expression of emotion.

CHAPTER 3

Interpretations

Analysis of the ten interviews resulted in the identification of four themes. The first theme is one that deals with respect for the women's parents that appeared both through direct statements and inferences made during the interviews. The respect that the women needed from and had for their parents and their parents' ideals could be seen in almost all aspects of the communication situations. The second theme that was discovered dealt with the control that the women placed on both their experience and expression of emotions. The third theme dealt with the issue of acceptance. This acceptance applied to almost all aspects of the women's lives--acceptance from family, friends, and the two varying cultures. The final theme that developed was one that dealt with the balance the women were trying to find in their lives, and the necessity of integrating the two different cultures into their lives in order to achieve that balance.

Respect for Parents

This theme deals with the idea that many of the women's actions and reactions were based on their relationship with their parents. How the women decided to express their emotions in situations where their parents were present was based on how they believed their parents would react. In most of these cases, respect for the parent would inhibit the expression of emotions the women believed would embarrass or in some way show disrespect for their parents. L.K. stated "you need parent support . . . there is like a restriction, a

boundary, respect, maybe, so I can't tell them exactly how I feel about stuff."

P.R. explained that she would never tell her parents that she was mad at them because "I was never to question their authority . . . I could never confront them with it." F.K. states, "We're all trying to succeed not for ourselves but for our parents."

This theme also appeared in the situations involving both the parents and the women's American friends. In these situations, the women withheld the expression of their true emotions out of respect for their parents and a desire not to cause embarrassment to them. The women put their parents' beliefs before the American way of expressing emotion. L.K. said that in these cases she would not express herself. She stated, "I can't yell with my parents, there is a respect that you're supposed to keep, and I don't think I'd be able to express myself freely . . . (parental influence) would back me away, down, to express myself as I would when the friends weren't there." A.F. also shared the idea that respect for parents should be foremost in this situation. She stated, "I would express myself, but I would still keep the respect for my parents in mind."

Another aspect of respect and parents was the need of some of the women to have respect from their parents. A.F. stated in reference to thinking about the consequences of expressing herself that, "I felt the other consequences would be, my parents would be mad at me or they would respect me less if I showed anger or frustration or something like that." This desire for respect from her parents may actually reflect the respect that she had for her parents. In acting in ways that would earn their parents' respect, these women

were showing respect to their parents and their parents' values.

These statements all reflect a respect for the women's parents. A respect that controlled the way they expressed themselves because of the fear of losing their parents' respect or causing their parents to believe that they did not respect them. This issue stems directly from the Asian culture and the hierarchical family situation. In such cultures, parents and elders demand and are considered to deserve the respect of the youth. This Asian cultural aspect is apparent in the way that these women expressed themselves in the presence of their parents. T.T. sums up this issue by stating, "At home, I see myself as the daughter, respect my parents, do what they want me to do. I'm going to always have this respect for them."

Control

This second theme addresses the issues of control and the freedom to express emotions. Seven of the women made comments about the issue of controlling the expression of their emotions. For some of them, this control was tied into respect for their parents. T.A. stated, "I think it differs because when my parents are present I know that . . . I guess it's totally different in a way where even though I try to control my emotions (with my friends), I know that it's O.K. if I do (express myself), whereas when my parents are present, I get the feeling that it's not O.K." L.K. also felt this difference. She stated, "I can't act the same way in front of my friends as I do in front of my parents. There is a very reserved relationship between parents, compared to in front of friends you act freely and say whatever you want to, whereas with parents you're more restricted." These

two women felt that the presence of their parents caused them to exercise more control over the expression of their emotions.

The absence of the parents caused the women to feel more free to express themselves and to be more in control of the situation. T.A. stated, "When it's just my friends, I always perceive the situation, I perceive myself as having much more control over the situation than if my parents were there." T.T. also experienced more freedom in that "when I get out I'm just like more free and I feel like I'm in control and I can do what I want to do. With my friends, I feel more free and more in control of what I want and what I want to do."

The issue of controlling the expression of emotion stems from Asian ideals. L.K. believes that culture has a large role "because that's what you were taught." T.L. comments that culture "has had a major impact because that's the way I was brought up. From having to learn how to discern when it's appropriate to when it's not, how to healthily express myself without reacting from my emotions or without harboring my emotions." Finally, T.A. stated, "Being brought up in an Asian household can really effect how you control your emotions. I guess being brought up by my parents, made me have a harder time expressing emotions. I have the greater advantage of controlling them. I don't know if that's good or bad."

The more traditional the family was in Asian ideals, the less likely the women were to express themselves freely. L.T. was one of the women who felt that she could not be open with her parents about her emotions. She stated, "My parents are traditional parents, like Vietnamese. I cannot address them in

American ways, my parents do not allow me to follow the ways." A.F. was another woman whose family was traditional. She stated, "They're so set in their beliefs, they seemed so rigid to me . . . I think with my family I'm more grown up. I have to be polite and formal with them . . . but with my friends, I can just hang out with them."

Those women whose families had become more Americanized or who held more Western ideals were more able to express themselves both to their families and to their friends. P.S. was one of the few women who felt that she could express herself to her parents. She stated, "Generally, I'm very open with my parents and I don't hold anything back. If I'm angry or upset I definitely let them know. I don't hesitate to argue and I don't hesitate to yell if I need to . . . they take it very well and they're a little bit different because they're more Americanized." She believes that the difference in her family is that her father is a political science professor "so he has a lot of Western philosophy that influences him and just what he studies and believes. So he kind of integrates and he takes what he believes is the best from both cultures. He's very open-minded about many different areas so he doesn't enforce much (cultural issues) at all."

The women controlled their emotions differently with family than with friends. This difference may be attributed to the difference in consequences. Asian cultures believe in the importance of family. For some of the women, the importance of maintaining family harmony inhibited their expression of emotions, but allowed them to be more free in expressing themselves to others. P.R.

stated, "When I'm with my friends it's always easier to express my feelings . . . they're closer to me and they know who I am . . . They know more about me than probably my family does in how I'm really feeling."

These women may have felt more able to express their emotions to their friends because in a sense the friends were not as important to the women as family. A.F. believes the consequences of expressing herself to her friends are less than expressing herself to her family. She stated, " . . . with my friends I don't think of any consequences because there really wouldn't be any bad ones because they couldn't disown me or anything like that." On the other hand, family can never be lost whereas the nature of friendship is not as secure. P.R. believes that she thinks about the consequences more with her friends because "I'm afraid of losing them . . . family is always there for you, it's unconditional." P.S. echoed this sentiment when she stated, "I approach things differently with friends that's for sure. I'm a little bit more careful in what I'm saying, what I say or how I phrase things just because I think the relationships different. Because with my parents even if we get into a fight, they're still going to be my parents and there's nothing that's going to change that." These differing viewpoints look at the strength of the family unit in the Asian society, but at two different aspects of it. The first that harmony must be maintained in the family unit in order for the family to remain whole, the second that the Asian family unit is strong and enduring.

Acceptance

The third theme that I identified was one of acceptance. This theme

includes the desire to be accepted by parents, family, friends, and society. This need for acceptance affected the way the women expressed their emotions. The difference in the expression of positive and negative emotions is indicative of this theme. All of the women felt that it was acceptable to express their positive emotions such as joy and happiness in any of the situations. The restrictions on expressing emotions became more apparent in the expression of the negative emotions of anger and sadness. Asian cultural influence can be clearly seen in these cases in that the negative emotions detracted from the image necessary to project in Asian cultures. A.F. stated, "That's how we were raised . . . you have to keep the surface happiness. To express any other emotion like anger or sadness, your parents will try to get you through it, but you really have to keep the demeanor that you're happy and that everything's O.K. for other people." C.S. continues on this theme by stating, "We never express our other emotions like crying and anger. We feel more comfortable with the positive ones in front of other people than with the negative ones." The control placed over the expression of negative emotions ties into the issue of acceptance. These women controlled their expression of emotion in order to be accepted by those around them.

The need for acceptance by parents was apparent. L.T. stated, "When my parents are there I don't want them to think that I'm a lousy child so I try to please my parents if they're there." F.K. stated, "It's hard for me to ever categorize my own feelings or even define my own feelings because I always define myself on how other people feel. I felt like they (parents) were happy

which made me happy which was my ultimate goal. I think it was the way I was raised. It's more of an internal thing, an internal guilt that they made us feel." These two women wanted to be accepted by their parents and therefore adjusted their expression of emotion to please what they felt their parents desired.

This issue also appeared in the manner in which these women interacted with their friends. The necessity of maintaining a positive face inhibited the expression of emotions for some of the women. Even though these women felt more able to express emotions with friends than with family, the control over their emotions was still great. This inhibition was even greater with friends from the same background as the women. L.K. stated, "I feel more closed to the friends from my background because you can't really share everything. I can talk to the other friends." She felt that in order to be accepted by her Asian culture, she must withhold emotion from those friends from her culture. L.K. did not want to seem different, more Americanized, with her friends so she placed more control on how she interacted with them.

Some of the women also found a correlation between the closeness that they shared with a community and the maintaining of that community's manner of expressing itself. This closeness and the desire to be accepted by the community that they lived in affected how they expressed their emotions. C.S. felt that the influence of the Filipino community caused her to restrain her expression of emotions in order to be more accepted by the community. The community demanded Asian ideals be upheld or acceptance in the community

was denied. She stated, "When they look at you, the Filipino community, when they talk about you, they say, 'Oh yeah, she's Americanized. We don't like her because she's American'. It hurts, I'm one of them, really they just need to know (that)."

The influence of the culture that the women live in also affected their behavior. T.L. stated, "I think I was more Asian when I lived in Hawaii and when I was constantly within that type of environment. I'm more Westernized now . . . from living in the United States and the way that society thinks, the attitudes, the openness." She relates that to the fact that she doesn't fit into the traditional Asian stereotype of women. She stated, "I'm talkative . . . and I don't think that I'm as feminine or delicate, definitely not subservient."

Balance and Integration

The final theme that I identified was one of balance and integration between the different cultures. The conflict between the two culture's ideals also leads to conflict within the women who are trying to deal with both cultures. Although the women interviewed all realized that a difference existed in the cultures and the expression of emotions in the cultures, none of the women felt that they were truly American or truly Asian. Those women who were trying to utilize two separate sets of rules felt confused and unsure. They had difficulty in moving back and forth between the two worlds. Many of these women have determined that it is necessary to integrate Asian and American cultural rules in order to express themselves. Only by finding this balance between the two culture's expectations are these women able to function in both worlds and find

harmony within themselves.

Five of the women commented on this conflict that they have faced and how they dealt with it. L.K. stated, "You're not sure whether you're supposed to be Asian-American or just Asian. It gets really confusing sometimes because you don't know which way to go." A.F. made the comment that "sometimes it feels like I'm split right in two. I feel like I have to find a balance between the honesty I show my friends and just kind of integrate the two worlds instead of being so separated." T.L. stated, "By being brought up in two separate ways at one time, I found myself confused. So I have learned, kind of like what someone was telling me, the yin and yang, finding the balance, the harmony." T.A. commented, "It's always better to have the middle of the road approach whereas my parents are one extreme and I guess other people's parents are the other extreme. I think it's better to have a little bit of both because sometimes you can't go outside crying over every little thing or getting upset over every little thing. Go through life that way, it'd make your life hell."

Even though many of the women are trying to find the balance between the two cultures, the process has been painful and confusing. For some of the women the struggle for balance and harmony is still present. F.K. sums up this feeling by stating, "It's like separate worlds and I'm trying but I really don't know how to kind of put them all together and then that gives me a sense of I don't know who I am. I don't know where my ethics and my morals stand. I'm in these three different worlds all the time. I'm like three different people. I've been trying to put it all together which takes a lot of hurt on my part and I think

because of that, because I'm concentrating on bringing it all together so much that I don't see that maybe it's all me."

Even in finding the balance between the two cultures, most of the women showed Asian cultures to still be dominant in how they expressed themselves. This could be seen in the reluctance to express negative emotions in all three situations, as well as in the maintaining of respect for family and parents. The women seem to be developing a merged set of rules for expressing emotion that is taking aspects of both cultures into account. They feel the need to maintain harmony, but yet feel that they are able to express themselves more than their parents can, and more openly in the settings where parents were absent. A.F. stated, "Now I'm balancing out, and mostly, even if the balance is a little weighted towards my cultural side, it's still O.K. because that's where I was born. You just have to find your own balance . . . but you've got to keep some sort of integration between the two because otherwise you're torn in two and that's no way to live your life."

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

The literature on cultural differences suggests that Asian and American cultures differ in several ways. There is a philosophical difference between how America values logical thinking and expression of thought (Pearce & Cronen, 1980) and how Asian cultures stress harmony (Pearce & Cronen, 1980; Park & Kim, 1992; Shenkar & Ronen, 1987). The styles of communicating also differ. Eastern cultures stress nonconfrontational and unemotional communication, while Western cultures stress confrontation and emotion (Wetzel, 1988; Ma, 1992). The cultures also differ in their world view as well as in their view of self. Asian cultures stress collectivism and interdependence and American culture stress individualism and independence

The findings of this study generally correspond with the cultural differences suggested in the literature. The women talked of Asian and American cultural influences in ways that the literature would predict. However, by focusing on the integration of the two cultures rather than just the differences between them, my analysis offers insight into what it is like to be living with the influence of two cultures simultaneously. In this chapter I use the four themes that emerged in my analysis to answer my two research questions. Following this is a discussion of the limitations of this study. After this are suggestions for further research into this relatively untouched area of Asian-American women.

Discussion

The interview process itself offers insight into these women and their

expression of emotion. I had hoped to gain information on how these women actually expressed themselves, i.e. vocal tone and facial expressions. However, my questions did not lead these women to discuss these behavioral aspects of expression of emotion. Although I used very specific probing questions about what the women were feeling, the women were unable to recall specific behavioral information. This could be attributed to the fact that time had dimmed their memories of the situations or that people in general do not recall these types of specifics. It is possible that what was important to these women, and therefore what they remember, was the thought processes dealing with whether to express themselves or not.

The four themes can now be directed towards the research questions. The first research question, "How do Asian and American cultures influence first-generation Asian-American women's experiences of emotion?" can be answered by viewing what these women felt about the expression of emotion. The literature indicates that culture plays a role in how an individual views emotion (Kitayama & Markus, 1994). Asian and American cultures are different in how they view emotion and emotional expression based on their philosophical differences (Casmir, 1993; Pearce & Cronen, 1980; Park & Kim, 1992; Shenkar & Ronen, 1987) as well as their ways of viewing the self and culture.

The women I interviewed experienced these cultural differences in ways that led to feelings of confusion. The women felt confused as a result of trying to understand and live in both worlds. The respect that they had for their parents and the desire to be accepted by Asian culture inhibited their expression of

emotion, yet the surrounding American community accepted the expression of emotion. This difference led to confusion about how to act. And in those cases when they acted as the surrounding American culture would, they felt guilt.

Although these women did not deny their feelings, most were not able to express themselves in such a way that their true feelings were known. Although they knew it was acceptable to feel angry and upset, they would not express these feelings to their parents because they knew Asian cultures frowned on the display of such negative emotions (Scherer et al., 1988).

The theme of balance is also useful in answering the first research question. Most of the women felt that it was impossible to live two different lives. They felt that it was necessary to integrate Asian and American cultures in not only how they experienced emotion but in their whole lives.

The answer to the second research question, "How do Asian and American cultures influence first-generation Asian-American women's expression of emotions?" can be found in all four of the themes. The respect for the parents inhibited the expression of emotions by these women, especially negative emotions. This respect that many of the women commented on stemmed from their upbringing. The ideas of collectivism and interdependence of Asian cultures (Triandis, 1994; Matsumoto, 1991; Markus & Kitayama, 1994a) can be seen in the way in which these women withheld the expression of emotions. They did not express the negative emotions to their parents, and only in small amounts to their friends. These women did not want to disturb the harmony of those around them, so they maintained a positive facade in most of

the circumstances.

The issue of control can also be related to the difference between collectivist cultures and individualistic cultures. These women maintained control over the expression of their emotion in order to maintain the status quo, an aspect of Asian cultures. When most of these women were with their American friends, even though they still maintained control of the expression of emotion, it was to a lesser degree. This may be accounted for by the acceptance of individualistic cultures, such as America, to accept the expression of emotion and in many ways to encourage it.

The theme of acceptance also can be seen in how these women expressed their emotions. Since they wanted to be accepted by the culture or surroundings that they were in, many of the women acted in such a way that the culture would accept. This may have meant that they controlled their expression given the situation. The need for acceptance by those around them caused some of these women to not express their negative emotions, as well as to withhold how they were truly feeling.

The difference between the collectivist and individualistic views of culture may have been the cause for the need for balance and integration. The balance that some of the women had found affected how they expressed their emotions. They found that they could not be truly Asian nor truly American in how they expressed their emotions, so they found a way to integrate the two expectations. For most of the women, this balance is not truly equal, the effect of Asian cultures has had a significant impact on their behavior. This could possibly be

because that is how they were raised, that is primary in their self-consciousness.

In general, Asian cultures seemed to influence these women's experience and expression of emotion more than the American culture did. Asian cultural ideals can be seen in almost all aspects of the way in which these women viewed and expressed emotion. The themes of respect and control were very strongly Asian in orientation. The American influence on the experience and expression of emotion was subtle. Most of the women felt more able to discuss their feelings with American friends, they understood the differences between the cultures, and were able to integrate aspects of the American culture into their expression of emotion. The most significant impact of the American culture on the expression of emotion was in the confusion these women felt in trying to live within the American society while adhering to Asian values. This confusion led to the need for balance and integration of the two cultures in the way in which these women expressed emotion.

I expected to find that these women were integrating the two cultures in learning to communicate their emotions. I believe the implication that their Asian background had more of an effect on their communication styles than the American influence could be attributed to the fact that the Asian expectations were always clear to them. These women always knew what was expected of them by their parents; they knew what was acceptable and what was not. This knowledge allowed them to interact with their parents in a way which maintained the respect for their parents that is a part of Asian cultures. Although these women knew that American culture allowed for more freedom of expression, they

also knew that they must still control their expression of emotion in order to not embarrass their parents or lose face within their Asian community.

Although most of these women had found a way to integrate the expectations of the two cultures, some were still confused. I believe those who were confused were unhappy with their situations. One of the women expressed a desire to return to her native home. She believed this would allow her to be accepted, to be more sure of herself, to be happy. This confusion these women faced, and in some cases are still facing is one that touches their very existence. They cannot escape the differences between the cultures and there has been no easy solution.

After interviewing these women I felt many different emotions. I was able to empathize with their struggle and the feelings of confusion they had, yet there was a feeling of relief that I did not have to deal with trying to integrate two different cultures. I have great respect for these women and what they have accomplished and the struggle they face every day in trying to cope with two very different cultural expectations in how they express their emotions. Emotions are a part of humanity, something that cannot be avoided, and so these women must learn how to express their emotions in a healthy way, yet in a way that allows them to fulfill the expectations that their parents and society have. Integrating the two cultures has allowed some of these women to feel a balance in their lives. This integration may be the only possible way to overcome confusion and to find peace within the new world that first-generation Asian-American women live in.

Limitations

This research study had several limitations and problems. The first was the difficulty of finding women to interview. Although there is a large population of first-generation Asian-American women in Omaha, contacting them was difficult. One woman interviewed believed that even though I was Asian, I was not a part of any Asian sub-culture in Omaha. Therefore I was unable to tap into these sub-cultures in order to find participants. Another problem was that doing general advertising for subjects was not successful since for the most part, this group is one that is not open to talking about themselves.

Another limitation was in the interviewing process. It was difficult at times to try to get the women to understand the issues that I was searching for. Some of the women also found it hard to think of specific examples of situations in which they felt a strong emotion or expressed it. This may be due to the fact that except for happiness and positive emotions, these women were taught not to put much importance on the expression of negative emotions. For many of the women, negative emotions were the ones that were most vivid in their memories, but they had few memories of situations involving these emotions.

Another problem may have been in the questions themselves. They may have been too general in that the women were not always sure what I was asking. I found I had to clarify the questions and even give examples to the women before they were able to think of a situation to talk about. Probing questions were also necessary in order to fully understand what the women were trying to communicate. The use of so many interviewer questions may have

diminished the effectiveness of the oral history method since in some cases the women were not really telling stories about themselves but began to answer questions instead.

A final limitation is the small number of participants in this study. Oral histories are rich data which enable in-depth study of women's experiences. However, because there were only ten participants who were all from the same current geographical area, it is impossible to judge whether the findings are universal. Also since the subjects came from different ethnic backgrounds, it is inappropriate to generalize beyond the experiences of these women. Further, since the subjects came from different ethnic backgrounds, it is important that generalizations about all Asian cultures not be made.

Further Research

Since this area is relatively new in the research arena, there are many possibilities for further research. A few suggestions are made here. Studies into specific Asian sub-groups would be beneficial in understanding the unique way in which different sub-cultures that share a same overall background view emotions and the expression of emotions. A cross generational study would be especially informational. Such a study might view a family of women including individuals from different generations. Analysis could look at the possible change through the generations and the influence of life in America on that change.

Studies into the expression of specific emotions would also be beneficial. These studies could view not only the thought processes behind expressing

emotions, but the actual expression of the emotion. In-depth case studies could also provide information. Letting an individual talk about her life experiences, not only dealing with emotion but other areas, could open understanding into what living in two worlds really entails.

Studies of other ethnic groups with hyphenated identities are also necessary. These individuals meet challenges every day that those of us with only one dominant culture never have to face. In better understanding the difficulties and challenges that those with hyphenated identities must face could open understanding of a growing segment of the world in which we live.

First-generation Asian-American women face an interesting challenge in the conflict between the two worlds that must be faced and overcome. Most of these women have integrated the two cultures in some manner, but the process has not been easy. Although some of the women interviewed have been able to successfully integrate the expectations of Asian and American cultures in the expression of emotion, others are still experiencing the confusion and pain that come from the difficulty of trying to live in two different worlds. The area of emotion is only one of the areas of their lives that are affected by this conflict. Individuals who are trying to live within two cultures face many unique challenges which other people do not. Study into the feelings, insights, and thoughts of Asian-Americans can allow us a better understanding of the difficulty they face and a more complete understanding of the communication process as a whole. As A.F. stated, "Communication is the key, it's the median."

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